In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as set forth below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (withdrawn) A hydrogel for use in the treatment ~~or prevention~~ of arthritis, symptoms associated therewith, or arthritis and symptoms associated therewith, said hydrogel comprising about 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

2. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1, which is made by combining acrylamide and methylene bis-acrylamide in a molar ratio of 150:1 to 1000:1.

3. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1, comprising less than 15% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

4. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 3 comprising at least 1% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

5. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1 further comprising at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

6. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1 further comprising at least 90% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

7. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1 having a complex viscosity of 2 to 25 Pa s.

8. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1 having a complex viscosity less than 25 Pa s and an elasticity modulus less than 200 Pa.

9.-16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A method of treating ~~or preventing~~ arthritis, symptoms associated therewith, or arthritis and symptoms associated therewith comprising administering a hydrogel to a mammal, said hydrogel comprising 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

18. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel is obtained by a process comprising combining acrylamide and methylene bis-acrylamide in a molar ratio of 150:1 to 1000:1

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises less than 15% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 1% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

21. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel has a complex viscosity of about 2 to 25 Pa s.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 80% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the administering comprises injecting the hydrogel into the intra-articular cavity of a joint.

25. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel is radio-~~labelled~~ labeled and the administering may be monitored by ~~visualisation~~ visualization.

26. (currently amended) The method according to claim ~~17~~ 24, further comprising ~~further~~ administering hydrogel injections to excessively stressed areas of the intra-articular cavity.

27. (withdrawn) A prosthetic device for the treatment of arthritis, symptoms associated therewith, or arthritis and symptoms associated therewith, wherein the device comprises a polyacrylamide hydrogel comprising 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel, said device administered to the intra-articular cavity of joint.

28. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

29. (withdrawn) A prosthetic device for augmenting or replacing cartilage in the intra-articular cavity of a joint, said device comprises a polyacrylamide hydrogel comprising about 0.5 to 25% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

30. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the hydrogel further comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

31. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, implanted or injected into an intra-articular cavity of a joint.

32. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the device is implanted and surface treated.

33. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the joint is selected from the group consisting of a knee joint, a hip joint; and the metacarpal-phalangeal and interphalangeal joints in hands and feet.

34. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claim 27, wherein the hydrogel is radio-labelled.

35. (cancelled)

36. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 75% by weight pyrogen-free water.

37. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 90% by weight pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

38. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel comprises at least 75% by weight saline solution.

39. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the hydrogel has a complex viscosity of about 2 to 25 Pa s.

40. (withdrawn) The prosthetic device according to claims 27 or 29 which is used for treating arthritis or augmenting or replacing cartilage in the intra-articular cavity of a joint.

41. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1, obtainable under conditions of radical initiation and washing with pyrogen-free water or saline solution.

42. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1, comprising less than 3.5% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

43. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 16, wherein the hydrogel comprises less than 3.5% by weight polyacrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.

44. (withdrawn) The hydrogel according to claim 1, obtainable by combining acrylamide and methylene-bis-acrylamide in amounts so as to give about 0.5 to 25% by weight acrylamide, based on the total weight of the hydrogel.